Thiruparankundram: SC suspends trustees, summons TN Chief Secretary

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News

As its order of 20 November 2026 on lighting the Karthigai Deepam on the Thiruparankundram hill (Madurai) was not followed, a Supreme Court Bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and Vipul M. Pancholi on 27 November 2026 suspended the board of trustees of the Arulmigu Subramaniaswamy temple and appointed two retired judges as receivers. It directed the Tamil Nadu Chief Secretary to appear in person and to file an affidavit on the emails, calls and messages exchanged between officials. Contempt notices were issued to the Chief Secretary, the Director General of Police, the Madurai Collector and others; security of the hill was handed to the CRPF, and the lamp was ordered to be lit at the deepathoon on 28 November 2026.

Background

- In December 2025, a single judge of the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court allowed the deepam to be lit at the stone lamp pillar (deepathoon) on the hilltop; a Division Bench of the High Court upheld it on 6 January 2026. The Supreme Court issued notice on the State's appeal and, on 20 November 2026, allowed the lamp to be lit.
- Article 129 makes the Supreme Court a court of record with power to punish for contempt. Article 142 lets it pass any order for complete justice, and Article 144 requires all civil and judicial authorities to act in aid of the Supreme Court.

- Articles 25 and 26 guarantee freedom of religion and the right of religious denominations to manage their affairs. In Tamil Nadu, temples are administered under the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR&CE) Act, 1959.

Tamil Nadu link: Thiruparankundram is the first of the six abodes (Arupadai Veedu) of Lord Murugan; it is a rock-cut cave temple of the Pandya period, where Murugan's marriage to Deivanai is celebrated. The Karthigai Deepam festival falls in the Tamil month of Karthigai; the best-known lamp is the Maha Deepam at Tiruvannamalai.

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

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What is the background to this news?

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Practice questions (with answers)

1. Whom did the SC summon for not implementing the Thiruparankundram Karthigai Deepam order?

A) Madurai District Collector

B) TN Chief Secretary

C) State DGP

D) HR&CE Commissioner

Answer: B – Explanation: The SC summoned the Chief Secretary and also suspended the temple's board of trustees.

2. Which of the following is NOT one of Lord Murugan's six abodes (Arupadai Veedu)?

A) Pazhamudircholai

B) Tiruchendur

C) Swamimalai

D) Marudamalai

Answer: D – Explanation: The six abodes: Thiruparankundram, Tiruchendur, Palani, Swamimalai, Tiruttani, Pazhamudircholai.

3. 1. Art. 129: SC is a court of record. 2. Art. 144: authorities must act in its aid. Which is/are correct?

A) 1 only

B) 2 only

C) Both 1 and 2

D) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C – Explanation: Art. 129 – court of record with contempt power; Art. 144 – all authorities to act in aid of the SC.

4. Which Article empowers the Supreme Court to pass any order necessary for "complete justice"?

A) Article 141

B) Article 142

C) Article 143

D) Article 145

Answer: B – Explanation: Art. 142 – complete justice; 141 – law declared by the SC binds all courts; 143 – President's reference for advice; 145 – rules of court.

5. Where is the famous 'Maha Deepam' lit during the Karthigai Deepam festival?

A) Tiruttani

B) Tiruvannamalai

C) Palani

D) Srirangam

Answer: B – Explanation: In the month of Karthigai, the Maha Deepam is lit atop the Annamalai hill, Tiruvannamalai.